

Vision for Virginia's Outdoors

In utilizing and conserving natural resources of the nation, the one characteristic more essential than any other is foresight.

—Theodore Roosevelt



Hikers explore the wonders of Virginia's outdoors. Photo by Virginia Tourism Corporation.

Introduction

It is the vision of the 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* (VOP), the ninth VOP produced since 1965, to provide sound guidance and direction in meeting the state's needs for outdoor recreation and for the conservation of natural, cultural and scenic resources important to Virginians' quality of life.

After 400 years, Virginia remains a wonderfully attractive and desirable place to live and settle. Virginia is known as one of the most scenic states abounding with diverse natural resources that span the Coastal, Piedmont and Mountain regions. Immense opportunities are available for citizens and tourists to experience Virginia's history through its landscapes and cultural settings. The quality of life and economic well-being in the Commonwealth are directly linked to all of Virginia's outdoor resources. These same resources make Virginia popular and have resulted in steady patterns of increased settlement and growth since the Jamestown Colony was founded in 1607.

Over the past two decades, the state has seen its highest growth in population. The development resulting from this growth has stimulated a strong economy that has improved Virginia's business climate. At the same time, this period of growth and development has contributed to the unprecedented loss of farm and forestland. Water quality in many streams and rivers has deteriorated due to increased impervious surfaces and loss of natural buffers, resulting in significant impacts on aquatic life and outdoor recreation, as well as increased costs for water treatment. The lack of adequately integrated sound land use and transportation planning has fragmented natural resources, as well as local communities, requiring people to use their automobile for nearly every aspect of their lives.

The desire to change these patterns has increasingly turned into a ground swell of public support for better land use planning, preservation of working farms and forests, protection of our natural, historic and cultural resources, and for the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities. This was clearly shown by the voters' overwhelming passage of the 2002 State Parks and Natural Areas General Obligation Bond, as well as the vast majority of similar local referenda. It has been further evidenced by Gov. Tim Kaine's establishment of an aggressive state land conservation goal, the successful defense of the state's land preservation tax

credit program, the recent state funding for purchase of development rights for agriculture and forest lands, and the insistence of additional local land use controls into the recent state transportation debate. At the more than eighty VOP public meetings held by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) staff across the state during 2005 and 2006, citizens expressed overwhelming concern and support for protecting our natural resources and open space, for enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities, and for making our communities more livable and walkable. The urgency to act now is compelling. The opportunities that exist today to conserve important resources, provide outdoor recreational opportunity and build on the quality of life desired in Virginia must be seized before they are forever lost.

Virginia's identity is its land. From the shores of Chincoteague to the hills and valleys of Cumberland Gap, Virginia's beauty is unmatched. But as quickly as our population is growing, our rate of development is growing even faster. If we continue as we have, Virginia will develop more land in the next 40 years than we have in the last 400 years. Without foresight, without a plan to focus and manage that growth in a balanced way, we will be failing ourselves and future generations.

—Gov. Tim Kaine, Environment Virginia Conference, April 20, 2006

Future generations will live with decisions now being made. The vision of the Virginia Outdoors Plan is that it will contribute to today's decisions so that when our sons and daughters and their children look back, they will be proud of the work this generation has done for the outdoors.

Issues and trends

Numerous issues were identified during the preparation of the 2007 VOP. Many of these are addressed in subsequent chapters. The following is a list of the most critical issues and trends related to the state's overall outdoor recreation and resource conservation needs.

Funding and economics

The greatest obstacle in meeting identified needs for outdoor recreation and land conservation is availability of public funding. Virginia's outdoor recreation and land conservation initiatives continue to struggle from

the lack of consistent, stable state funding. While much has been, and will continue to be, leveraged through strong public-private partnerships, there needs to be a consistent and stable source of funding at both the state and federal level for outdoor recreation and land conservation efforts. In addition, much of Virginia's park and recreational infrastructure at local and state levels is aging and in need of major maintenance and updates. Adequate public funding for proper operation and management of these outdoor recreation resources is also a critical need. Thus stable funding at all governmental levels is essential to the sustained economic health and quality of life in the Commonwealth.

Demonstrating the connection between economic benefit with outdoor recreation and land conservation remains an important issue. Communities that grow according to smart growth principles thrive economically. They tend to attract investment, revitalize urban areas and boost tourism, while safeguarding the environment and preserving parks and open space. They also develop a "sense of place" within the community that is attractive to tourists, businesses and residents. Virginians in rural, urban and suburban growth areas have voiced interest in promoting strong linkages to the economic benefits of outdoor recreation, open space and land conservation, so those factors can compete on equal footing with other economic drivers in the decision-making process. Several case studies supporting this concept are included in this report (see Chapter V. Economic Benefits of Recreation, Tourism and Open Space).

Citizens support the use of public funds for outdoor recreation and land conservation. The 2006 VOS shows over 94 percent of citizens believe it is either "important" or "very important" to protect Virginia's natural and open space resources. It is noted that 91 percent support state funds being used for the protection of our natural resources. Most prefer state funds for land protection to be expended for the outright purchase of lands from willing sellers with future provisions for public use and access.

Outdoor recreation

The integration of parks and open space into a locality's comprehensive plan is critical to improving quality of life. Emphasis should be placed on components such as hiking and biking trails, water access and blueways, community parks and local recreation centers. The integration of these activities into community



Rock Climbing. Photo by Passages Adventure Camp.

planning makes walkable, livable communities a reality, especially where local parks and recreation departments work in concert with economic development, tourism and planning departments to create a community vision that connects open space, land conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities. Citizens across the state are emphatic that these important outdoor recreation resources must continue to be acquired and protected.

The strong turnout at VOP public meetings corroborates data from the 2006 VOS conducted by researchers at Virginia Commonwealth University that showed 92 percent of Virginians rated access to outdoor recreation opportunities as either "very important" or "important". In a technology-driven society, it is through the individual and collective outdoor experiences that one develops an appreciation and respect for our natural resources. As author Richard Louv puts it in his book, *Last Child in the Woods*: "The future of children in nature has profound implications not only for the conservation of land but also for the direction of the environmental movement."

Public lands that offer a myriad of active and passive recreation opportunities are needed throughout the Commonwealth to meet the needs of a growing population. Citizens want additional public lands that are accessible for a variety of outdoor recreational activities and as places to experience and interact with nature. Funding for public recreational land acquisition is a necessary component of a comprehensive strategy, because private lands protected by conservation easements rarely include public access.

Water access, trails, greenways and blueways

The two highest outdoor recreation needs indicated in the 2006 VOS were additional public access to Virginia's waters and trails for walking and bicycling. Over the past 15 years, the popularity of walking for

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pleasure, bicycling and water-related activities has grown substantially, and thus the high demand for additional resources to meet the need. To help meet this demand, linear linkages, known as greenways on land and as blueways or water trails on water, are being planned and implemented in several parts of Virginia. In some ways, Virginia has experienced an explosion in interest in trails of all types in recent years, with more on the horizon. In the past few years, several trails have been added as significant resources, including: the Captain John Smith Adventures on the James, and Mattaponi, Pamunkey and York rivers, the Virginia Capital Trail from Williamsburg to Richmond, the Hawksbill Greenway in Luray, the Shenandoah River Blueway in Rockingham County, the Radford Greenway system, the James River Park Mountain Bike Trail System in Richmond, the Tobacco Heritage Trail through the counties of Southern Virginia, and the Smith River Trail in Henry County.

To meet future demand, more greenways, blueways and trails are needed. Greenways are often established in riparian corridors beside a river or stream and may be suitable for trail development. Selected sites along the trail within the greenway may also serve as water trail or blueway access points.

Localities should also consider local planning for specific water access sites for swimming, boating, fishing and beach use. When planning linear corridors to meet the growing needs for trails and water access,

both water and land-based resources must be considered. If strategically planned, greenways and blueways may enhance human and wildlife connections by creating outdoor recreation opportunities while conserving important lands for habitat and ecological health.

Nature-deficit disorder

According to references included in the book *Last Child in the Woods*, an alarming trend in attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity in many youths across the country today has been attributed, in part, to a lack of time spent in the outdoor environment. A related theme was expressed by many Virginians attending VOP meetings across the state. By and large, citizens expressed concern that today's children are not interacting in nature as they had in the past. This lack of interaction with our natural world in a meaningful way has been termed by author Richard Louv as "nature-deficit disorder".

Television, internet and computer games compete for and often dominate a child's recreation and leisure time. Today's society has also promoted a culture of fear of the outdoors and put up barriers to traditional recreation. Consequently, children are spending less time outside and not developing important links with our natural world. This contact has been found to be important to childhood development. The ability to recreate outdoors in safe places is now being recognized as essential to social development and to a healthy lifestyle.



Canoeing in the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest. Photo by DOF.



Virginia's vision for the outdoors depends on youth experiencing nature. Photo by C. Vernon Spratley Middle School.

A concerted effort must be made to link environmental education and healthy lifestyle initiatives to encourage citizens to maintain a connection with nature. Time spent recreating in nature builds self-esteem, fosters creativity and enhances personal and spiritual growth. For all ages, easily accessible parks and natural places are necessary for providing recreation, inspiration and essential respite from the stressors associated with an increasingly fast-paced and technological environment. So, too, is the need for more meaningful outdoor experiences for children. If existing and future generations do not experience nature, support for Virginia's natural resources could wane, breaking Virginia's tradition for the love and stewardship of the outdoors.

Land conservation and green infrastructure planning

If Virginia is to sustain the quality of life for which the state has been known these past 400 years, sound resource conservation and green infrastructure planning are of paramount concern. Current development trends and patterns are causing an escalation in the loss and degradation of the state's precious cultural landscapes and natural resources. The conversion of open space, agricultural and forestland is increasing faster than the population is as a whole. Of all the development that has occurred in the past 400 years, more than a quarter of it has taken place in the past 15 years. If Virginia continues to grow with these same development patterns, more land will be developed in the next 40 years than has been since the Jamestown settlement was established in 1607.

In 2000, the Virginia population was 7,078,501 and was ranked 17th in population growth and was the 12th most populous state. In 2006, the U.S. Census

projections show Virginia at 7,642,884. It is projected by 2020 that Virginia's population will grow to 8.6 million (Virginia Employment Commission, 2007). According to the Center for Watershed Protection, from 1990 to 2000, Virginia experienced a 45 percent increase in impervious (non-porous) surfaces such as roads. Sound land use planning and green infrastructure must be applied as never before if Virginia is to achieve a sustainable future.

To assist in assessing land consumption patterns, the Virginia Vulnerability Model was developed by DCR in an effort to map predicted areas of high growth across the Commonwealth (see Map I-1). This Geographic Information System (GIS) based model provides a large-scale picture of statewide growth patterns. The growth prediction model may be used as an indication of potential land use change over time. The model can help in the development of a green infrastructure plan, which would help determine where Virginia's land conservation priorities should be focused and facilitate a more integrated approach to land conservation, planning and development. Information on this modeling effort is found on the DCR website at www.dcr.virginia.gov/dnh/vclna.htm.

Water quality

At the public meetings across the state, citizens consistently raised concern about the condition of Virginia's waters. This is not surprising since clean water is critical to drinking water and to the enjoyment of popular outdoor recreation activities, such as fishing, swimming and boating. Four of the public's 10 most popular outdoor recreation activities (swimming, beach use, fishing and boating) are water dependent. Water quality must be maintained, not only to ensure that streams and rivers in the Commonwealth are suitable for recreational activities, but also to ensure adequate drinking water for existing and future populations. Watershed management strategies are essential to ensuring that the Commonwealth's lakes, rivers and streams and the Chesapeake Bay are maintained or restored to a level of quality that will meet the needs of both current and future generations.

Livable and walkable communities

During the VOP public meetings, citizens across the Commonwealth expressed a desire for livable and walkable communities. Current development patterns often require people to drive in order to run the most routine errands or even to reach local schools, often located only short distances away. Issues over health and obesity along with rising fuel costs and transportation concerns have grown significantly over the past five years. Virginians are increasingly asking for

Map I-1. Growth Prediction

Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment Virginia Urban Growth Prediction Model

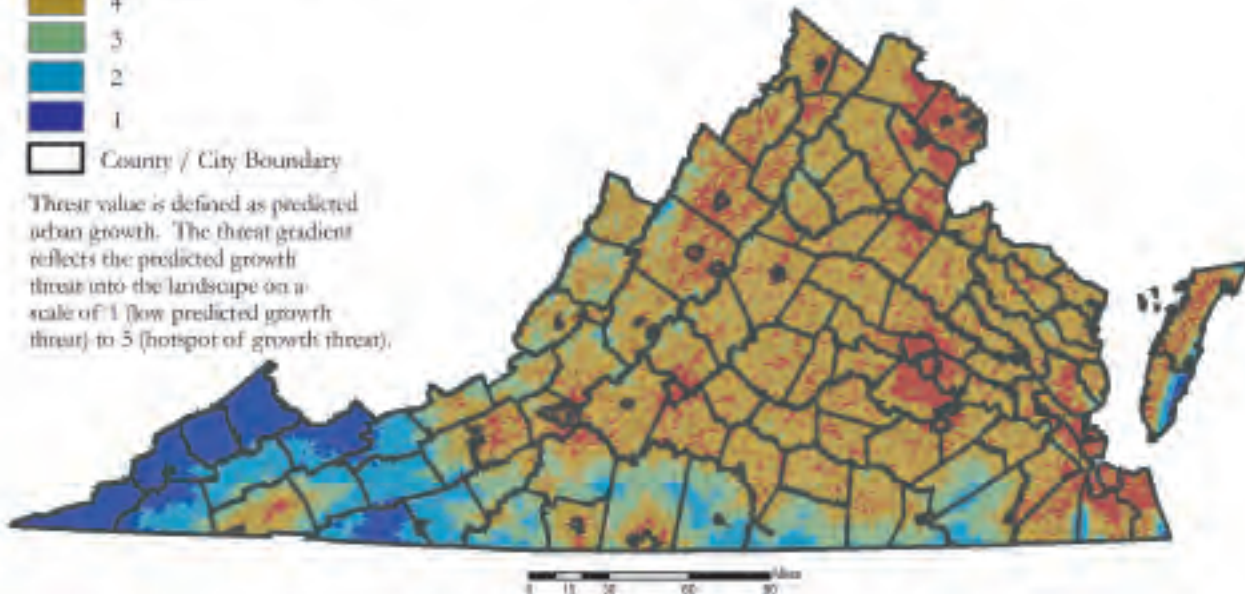
July 2008

Threat Value



County / City Boundary

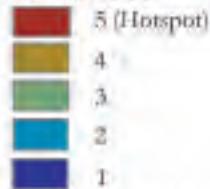
Threat value is defined as predicted urban growth. The threat gradient reflects the predicted growth threat into the landscape on a scale of 1 (low predicted growth threat) to 5 (hotspot of growth threat).



Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment Virginia Rural Growth Prediction Model

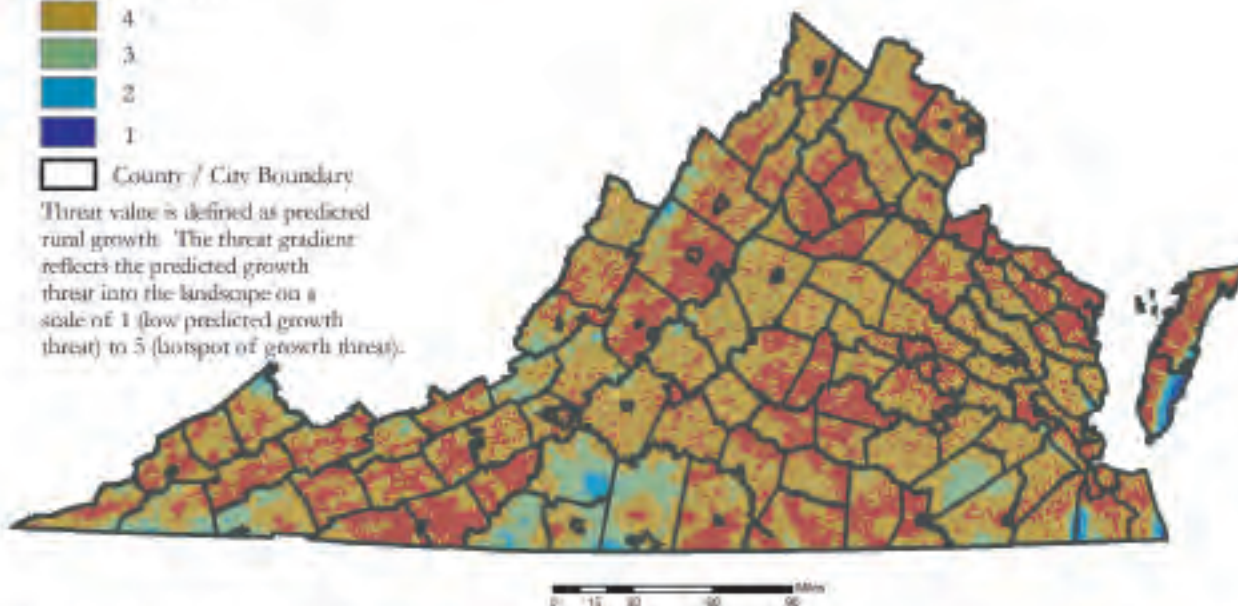
July 2008

Threat Value



County / City Boundary

Threat value is defined as predicted rural growth. The threat gradient reflects the predicted growth threat into the landscape on a scale of 1 (low predicted growth threat) to 5 (hotspot of growth threat).



For more information about the VCLNA and the Vulnerability Model, visit DCR's website: http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/vclna.shtml



*Walking at the Dutch Gap Conservation Area in Chesterfield County.
Photo by Jennifer Wampler.*

alternate options for commuting and safely traversing their communities without having to use their automobile. An indication of this trend is the increase and public support for new federal transportation-related programs, such as the "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" and "Safe Routes to School." Both of these offer funding assistance for the development of multi-use trails, which can provide alternative connections to community services.

In 1965, there were 1,799,557 vehicles registered in Virginia, and driving for pleasure was rated as the number one outdoor activity. By 2005, according to the Federal Highway Administration, Virginia had 6,503,843 vehicles registered, but driving for pleasure is no longer the most popular outdoor recreational activity with only about 50 percent of the population participating. Walking for pleasure is now the number one outdoor recreation activity with over 70 percent of the population participating. Livable and walkable communities offer alternate means of transportation while also connecting communities with trails and sidewalks. Such communities maximize parklands, open space and recreational services so that each is integrated into the fabric of everyday life.

Diversity

Hispanic and Asian minorities are among the fastest growing population groups in Virginia and account for a large portion of its population growth. Between 1990 and 2000, for example, the number of Hispanics in Virginia increased 112 percent. These demographic changes require increased awareness of the needs and expectations that differing cultures place on recreational facilities. Statewide educational efforts to promote outdoor recreation among minorities and embrace cultural diversity are important in providing all Virginians with outdoor recreation opportunities. More than ever, park managers must determine what practices work best in serving racial and ethnic minorities in recreational, natural and cultural resource settings. Additionally, the ability of public recreation and natural resource agencies to attract multicultural and diverse employees has continued to gain importance.

What's new in the 2007 VOP?

This edition of the *VOP* marks a significant milestone in the report, as it not only functions as the Commonwealth's most comprehensive outdoor recreation planning document, it also serves as the official guidance document for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF) (see Chapter III. Land Conservation). As a result, each planning region includes a new land conservation map produced by DCR showing existing protected lands. The inclusion of these maps for the first time show all known protected lands in a given region. The 2007 *VOP* also contains a new thematic organization centered on outdoor recreation, land conservation and green infrastructure.

Other new parts of the 2007 *VOP* are specific sections that address emerging issues, such as:

- Blueway planning and development.
- Virginia watersheds and their management.
- Environmental education aimed at conservation ethics and nature-deficit disorder.
- Health based lifestyles related to outdoor recreation opportunities.
- The impact of climate change on outdoor recreation.
- Transportation programs supporting outdoor recreation and livable/walkable communities.
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques and principles.

2007 VOP Planning Process

- DCR serves as the Commonwealth's lead outdoor recreation planning agency. As such, DCR is responsible for the development of the *VOP*. The department staff members began the planning process for the 2007 *VOP* with an assessment of implementation of the previous 2002 *VOP*.
- DCR staff conducted an inventory of local outdoor recreation facilities in 2005.
- In 2005, at the start of the planning process, a series of more than 40 public meetings were held by DCR to receive input from stakeholders, including citizens, organizations, localities and planning districts.
- The 2006 *VOS*, conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University for DCR, polled over 3,000 families and reported citizen input for numerous natural resource and outdoor recreation topics.
- DCR's outdoor recreation and conservation planners conducted research on trends and alternatives to address the issues identified in the public meetings.
- A Statewide Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), appointed by the director of DCR, convened five times throughout 2006 to provide input into the *VOP*.
- Drafts were produced and revised based on comments from the TAC, citizens and other local, regional, state and federal agencies.
- Individual meetings and interviews were held by DCR staff with planning district commission staff across the state to receive direct input about draft findings and recommendations for the planning regions.
- The draft 2007 *VOP* was posted on the department's website for citizen review and comment.
- A second series of more than 40 public meetings was held in 2006 across the state in the regional planning districts to present the draft findings, recommendations and receive additional public input.
- Input from the public meetings and written comments were considered, and a substantial amount incorporated in the development of the final document.

How the 2007 VOP addresses issues

The 2007 *VOP* offers specific statewide recommendations for program areas, land management agencies responsible for outdoor recreation, and land conservation. It also includes numerous recommendations for each planning region throughout the Commonwealth. The recommendations made in the main thematic chapters of the plan address the way land conservation and outdoor recreation needs are generally connected and related to meeting the future needs of Virginians. Program- and region-specific recommendations found throughout the 2007 *VOP* further connect these overarching thematic recommendations to specific situations and communities. The text below summarizes recommendations for each of the major thematic chapters.

Outdoor recreation

- A steady source of local, state and federal funding is needed to meet and sustain Virginia's outdoor recreation needs for a growing population.
- DCR should continue to provide technical assistance to local recreation departments and provide grant funding, as available, for local parks to help meet outdoor recreation needs.
- More communities should take advantage of the benefits derived from establishing regional park authorities.
- State and federal agencies should provide technical support and funding for regional park authorities and water access authorities to acquire, develop and manage resources to meet regional outdoor recreation needs.
- Local government should provide close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities to meet changing trends in recreation.
- Public recreational agencies must better address Virginia's increased demographic and cultural diversity in addressing local and regional outdoor recreation needs.
- In times of increasing demand but limited funding, public and private partnerships take on increased importance. Consequently, local, federal and state government agencies should expand development of private sector partnerships and volunteer support to meet growing outdoor recreation needs.
- A greater appreciation and understanding on the part of public and elected leaders is needed to secure and sustain resources. Recreation, natural resource and conservation professionals should place an increased emphasis on educating local and state leaders about the economic and health benefits of land conservation and outdoor recreation.

Land conservation

- Even with recent changes, Virginia currently has the most attractive state income tax incentives for land preservation in the nation. Such incentives must remain in place in the future if the Commonwealth's land conservation goals and protection of working landscapes are to be met. In addition, Virginia should join the vast majority of states in establishing a dedicated source of funding for future land acquisitions and opportunities.
- Increasingly, green infrastructure modeling and sound land use decision making should be implemented at the local, regional and state levels to conserve lands for future generations.
- Localities, state agencies and private organizations should develop additional methods of targeting preservation efforts using green infrastructure land planning techniques, geographic information systems, local comprehensive plans and decision support systems such as DCR's Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment.
- Partnerships among governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, volunteer groups and the private sector should be encouraged and expanded to meet conservation goals.
- Organizations undertaking land preservation projects should endeavor to protect a range of conservation benefits that exist on lands. Such benefits may include scenic open space, water quality protection, historic features, habitat preservation and public access.
- Conservation professionals and local, regional and state governments should provide increased education to the public and to decision makers regarding the economic, health, cultural and natural benefits of land conservation.

Green infrastructure

"Green Infrastructure is our nation's natural life support system – an interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, and other natural areas; greenways, parks and other conservation lands; working farms, ranches and forests; and wilderness and other open spaces that support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources and contribute to the health and quality of life for America's communities and people"

—Benedict and McMahon, 2006

Green infrastructure planning integrates outdoor recreation, open space, cultural resources and conservation lands into ongoing planning and land use management decisions. The 2007 *VOP* encourages the state, regions and localities to employ green infrastructure land planning because it supports cost effective, sound economic development in harmony with land conservation, cultural resource protection and outdoor recreation.

- Local, regional and state agencies should identify and obtain sources of funding for green infrastructure initiatives.
- Regional and local governments should more readily incorporate green infrastructure planning into their land use practices in order to ensure sustainable development of their community and a high quality of life for future generations.
- A number of the Commonwealth's state agencies are engaged in green infrastructure planning. Green infrastructure planning needs to be coordinated between state agencies.
- Regional and state agencies and other proponents of green infrastructure planning should demonstrate to elected officials and other leaders the benefits of green infrastructure planning.
- Local, regional and state agencies should continue data development for green infrastructure planning. GIS technology offers greater opportunity to enhance green infrastructure planning at the local, regional and state levels. Coordinated GIS data development and enhanced utilization of data will further benefit green infrastructure in the Commonwealth.

Forty years of progress for Virginia's outdoors

The first Virginia Outdoors Plan, *Virginia's Common Wealth*, printed in 1965, set the stage for outdoor recreation and conservation planning in Virginia. Using that plan as a benchmark for outdoor recreation and conservation, the 2007 *VOP* recommendations continue to reflect on the philosophy and objectives formulated in the first outdoors plan. Some issues addressed in the 2007 *VOP* were originally raised in 1965, but their attainment has not been fully realized. While significant challenges exist, the Commonwealth can take pride in accomplishments made in the past 40 years. Many of the objectives outlined in this first 1965 plan have been achieved and are summarized below.

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Table I-1. Summary of 1965 Recommendations and Accomplishments to Date

1965 Recommendation	Explanation of Progress
1. Adopt a state outdoor recreation and open space policy.	The Open-Space Land Act (§ 10.1-1700 et seq.) from the <i>Code of Virginia</i> comprehensively addresses outdoor recreation and open space policy.
2. Create a Commission of Outdoor Recreation.	The Commission of Outdoor Recreation was created in 1966. The commission functioned as its own entity to update the Virginia Outdoors Plan and implement recommendations in the plan. In 1983, the commission was folded into the Department of Conservation, Recreation and Historic Resources. Today, the function of the Commission continues in DCR and its attendant boards.
3. Enlarge and improve the State Park system.	The 1965 goal was set at 36 parks to be developed by 1976. The state park system has grown to include 34 developed state parks and the land for five more, bringing the current state park total to 39. Twenty-eight of the state parks are protected in perpetuity by the federal Land and Water Conservation Act.
4. The state should aid localities in resource conservation and development: a) research guidance and technical assistance, b) matching funds, and c) provision of legal powers.	<p>a) DCR continues to provide research guidance and technical assistance to localities for outdoor recreation and conservation initiatives.</p> <p>b) Grants appropriate to local governments pursuing outdoor recreation and conservation are outlined in Chapter VI of the 2007 <i>VOP</i>.</p> <p>c) The <i>Code of Virginia</i> makes provisions for including outdoor recreation, conservation and community planning in the local comprehensive planning process.</p>
5. Encourage greater use of regional planning commissions and regional park authorities.	Over the years, regional planning commissions have expanded to 22 across the Commonwealth. Each are supported by member localities and embrace outdoor recreation, cultural resources and land conservation in regional planning projects. Three regional park authorities currently operate in Virginia. These include the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, Fairfax County Park Authority and the Upper Valley Park Authority. In addition, under separate Virginia Code authorization, two public access authorities have been established in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. Both received federal seed funding for establishment from Virginia's Coastal Zone Management Program.

1965 Recommendation	Explanation of Progress
<p>6. Establish a system of scenic byways and provide for recreation access roads.</p>	<p>The Virginia Byways recognition program began in 1966 when the Virginia General Assembly passed the Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways Act (<i>Code of Virginia</i> §33.1-62). As of spring 2006, over 2,780 miles of roads have been designated Virginia Byways. In addition, four National Scenic Byways totaling about 359 miles, and the three USFS byways totaling about 96 miles, have also been recognized in Virginia.</p> <p>The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and DCR also administer the Recreational Access Roads Program providing state funds for the construction of vehicular access roads to public recreational areas.</p>
<p>7. Make our highways more pleasant.</p>	<p>VDOT administers programs to achieve this goal. Over the years, with more automobiles and growing populations, this focus has had to balance with growing traffic flow and accessibility needs.</p>
<p>8. Accelerate the program of Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries.</p>	<p>The Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries is now known as the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF). DGIF manages wildlife management areas and many public access sites to the state waters. Currently, there are 220 public access sites and 37 wildlife management areas. In recent years the non-game division of DGIF has expanded and realized success in developing and managing the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail (see the DGIF subsection of Chapter IX).</p>
<p>9. Encourage multiple uses of public lands to allow maximum recreation opportunity consistent with the land's primary purpose.</p>	<p>Cooperative agreements with the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, DGIF and the Department of Forestry encourage multiple uses of lands on state and federal properties. Also, at the local level, schools have and are encouraged to open recreation land and facilities to the community.</p>
<p>10. Encourage advance planning and land acquisition in areas of major water impoundments.</p>	<p>As population grows and localities expand, the demand for additional water impoundments has increased. State agencies have been actively involved in the new planning of existing reservoirs particularly when they are due for Federal Energy Regulatory Commission re-licensing. This process often results in enhanced recreational opportunities. Planning and cooperation with regional water authorities and local government is now a part of any new reservoir planning.</p>

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1965 Recommendation	Explanation of Progress
11. Develop the recreation opportunities created by soil and water conservation districts.	Where appropriate, soil and water conservation district impoundments have been used for recreational activity.
12. Recognize the vital role of the individuals and the travel industry.	The travel industry continues to be a mainstay of Virginia's economy. The travel industry continues to recognize and embrace the fundamental importance of marketing outdoor recreation opportunities, such as state parks, wildlife areas and historic sites. The relationship and partnership of sharing user data, including visitation, demand, supply and needs information, with Virginia Tourism and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources is continuing to grow.
13. Undertake a study of the relation of land taxation to the preservation of open space.	In 2006, Virginia is known to have one of the most attractive land preservation tax credit incentives in the nation.
14. Provide for acquisition of scenic and conservation easements.	With the establishment of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Virginia has become one of the nation's leaders in holding conservation easements. In addition, many agencies and nonprofit land trusts have developed over the past decade to play an ever important role in the use of easements to protect land.
15. Initiate water resource and river basin studies.	In 2003, DEQ reorganized to establish a new division, the Water Resources Division, responsible for water resources management.
16. Accelerate marine resources and beach erosion study.	The Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service (SEAS) was founded in 1980. SEAS is now a special function of the DCR erosion and sediment control staff. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science and other universities and agencies continue to conduct research on marine related issues.
17. Provide guidelines for planned communities and cluster development.	Legislation has been developed and expanded in recent years that enable local governments to consider planned communities and cluster development.
18. Create a Historic Landmarks Commission.	The Historic Landmarks Commission was created in 1966 and is now known as the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.
19. Establish the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.	The <i>Code of Virginia</i> established the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) in 1966. The VOF currently holds the 2nd most easements in the nation. In 2006 alone, more than 70,000 acres of land were conserved by VOF.

1965 Recommendation	Explanation of Progress
<p>20. The 1965 recommendation was to establish the Virginia Outdoors Fund as a stable funding source to implement the <i>Virginia Outdoors Plan</i>. The Virginia Outdoors Fund is currently funded by the federally supported Land and Water Conservation Fund. In 1999, the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation became the funding recipient for state dollars to be used in a grant match program for land protection.</p>	<p>The Virginia Outdoors Fund was established in 1966 and has been administered in Virginia, first by the Commission of Outdoor Recreation and now by DCR. Today, the Virginia Outdoors Fund is made possible through the federally funded Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Since 1999, the main source of state funds for land conservation has been the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF), which is a matching grant program staffed by DCR. With no stable funding source for outdoor recreation and land protection, state funding has fluctuated dramatically over the past decade. Over the lifetime of these two funds, they have collectively provided \$101,267,317 in matching grants for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation resources and land protection. The Virginia Outdoors Fund has contributed \$80 million in matching grants and the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation \$21,267,317.</p>
<p>21. Create greater awareness of the value of natural resources and environmental geography.</p>	<p>The establishment of Virginia Naturally, a multi-agency and organization effort headed by DEQ that serves as a conduit for environmental education, has been important with school age students and both formal and nonformal educators. In addition, curricula, such as the “Virginia State Parks: Your Backyard Classroom” developed for educators to use with Virginia’s state parks, as well as Project Underground, have proven to be effective environmental educational tools. Also, the development of the SOL’s, the expansion of the Virginia Natural History Museum, and the Science Museum of Virginia have greatly added to the public’s understanding of natural resources and environmental geography.</p>

The 400th anniversary of the settling of Jamestown has given Virginians an opportunity to look back at the struggles of those days and to marvel at how this country has grown. It also provides an opportunity to educate a new generation on what has changed, how it has changed and what needs to be done to ensure its legacy. This 400th anniversary inspires Virginians to exercise foresight so that 400 years from now, future generations will see Virginia as John Smith saw it, as a perfect place for man’s habitation. The 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* offers guidance and direction for what should be done today if Virginia is to preserve her outdoor legacy for future generations to enjoy. The information and recommendations that follow will assist all in charting a course to preserve Virginia’s “Common Wealth.”

Let us leave a splendid legacy for our children... let us turn to them and say, this you inherit: guard it well, for it is far more precious than money... and once destroyed, nature's beauty cannot be repurchased at any price.

—Ansel Adams, U.S. photographer, 1902-84

Resources:

Virginia Employment Commission, Economic Information Services Division. <http://velma.virtuallmi.com>.

Federal Highway Administration. www.fhwa.dot.gov.

Louv, Richard. 2007. Leave No Child Inside: The growing movement to reconnect children and nature. *Orion*, March-April.